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## NOTE ON THE EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF ATTENTION

By K. M. DALLENBACH

It seems necessary to reply briefly to two recent criticisms of my work on the experimental investigation of attention (this JOURNAL, xxiv., 1913, 465 ff.; xxvii., 1916, 443 ff.).

(1) With the remarks of K. Koffka (*Zeits. f. Psych.*, lxxiii., 1915, 281 f.) I am, if I understand them aright, in substantial agreement. But that, of course, is to say that I regard them as irrelevant, in so far as they are intended for a criticism of my method. Koffka, from the standpoint of his own theory of attention, attempts an analysis of the conditions of attention operative in my experiments. The conditions of observable clearness, however, mattered as little to my observers as would the conditions of the appearance of two greys in an experiment on the discrimination of brightness. We, by hypothesis, were observing a sensory attribute of the intensive sort, and were trying to correlate the quantitative changes of this attribute with objectively measurable variations. Clearness was the starting point, not the end-point, of the investigation.<sup>1</sup>

(2) H. Henning (*ibid.*, lxxxii., 1919, 245) adopts a more polemical tone, and is led thereby into several inaccuracies of statement. These are of minor importance: the serious thing is that he has failed to appreciate the significance, in this kind of work, of the 'wrong' judgments, and the interrelation of the Single Task and Double Task methods. He wholly misses the central fact of my results (though I naturally laid special stress upon it), that the curves of the 'right' judgments are skewed toward the higher, those of the 'wrong' judgments toward the lower degrees of observed clearness. A reader who should take Henning's review as adequate to my paper would, therefore, be misled.

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<sup>1</sup> Britz' *Theoretische u. experimentelle Untersuchung ueber d. psychol. Begriff d. Klarheit* (1913) has been discussed by Titchener (*Psych. Rev.*, xxiv., 1917, 43 ff.). I have myself repeated and extended Britz' experiments, and give a critical account of the results in the *Journ. Exper. Psych.*